

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 02767 281625Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9707
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 2767

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, OTRA, ELAB, GR
SUBJECT: OLYMPIC AIRWAYS PILOTS STRIKE: BOEING PILOTS STOP
WORK

REF: A) ATHENS 2555, B) ATHENS 2711, C) STATE 67982

1. OLYMPIC AIRWAYS NOTIFIED EMBASSY MARCH 26 THAT BOEING SEATTLE HAS GIVEN ORDER TO BOEING PILOTS TO STOP WORK BECAUSE OF LABOR DISPUTE AND CONCERN FOR WELFARE AND SAFETY OF BOEING PERSONNEL. BOEING PILOTS HAD REPORTEDLY RECEIVED THREATS BECAUSE THEY CONTINUED TO WORK IN SPITE OF STRIKE WHICH BEGAN ON MARCH 21.

2. OLYMPIC HAS REPLIED TO BOEING SAYING THAT STRIKE IS NOT BASED ON LEGITIMATE UNION DEMANDS AND ASKING BOEING TO RECONSIDER. AS FOR PERSONAL SECURITY, LOCAL POLICE AND OLYMPIC STAND READY TO PROTECT THE BOEING PILOTS.

3. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF MARCH 28, LOCAL BOEING REP SAID BOEING SEATTLE WAS UNDER GREAT PRESSURE FROM US AIRLINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION (ALPA). BOEING BELIEVES STRIKE WILL CONTINUE BEYOND MARCH 28 MIDNIGHT DEADLINE AND MAY BECOME MORE SERIOUS. SINCE BOEING PILOTS STOPPED WORK ALL OLYMPIC 737'S (WHICH SERVE
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 02767 281625Z

DOMESTIC ROUTES) HAVE BEEN GROUNDED.

4. DURING WEEKEND, RANKING GREEK AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER ATTACHED TO GREEK CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (KYP) CONTACTED EMOFF TO INFORM EMBASSY, "OFFICIALLY", THAT GOG WAS INTERESTED IN PROSECUTING PERSONS THREATENING BOEING PILOTS AND ASKED EMBASSY TO REQUEST PILOTS TO MAKE OFFICIAL COMPLAINT

SO THAT THIS MIGHT BE DONE. GREEK OFFICER FURTHER STATED THAT THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE EXPA (GREEK PILOTS ASSOCIATION) WAS KNOWN TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE GREEK COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE EXTERIOR (KKE - EXTERIOR) AND WAS WORKING AGAINST THE BEST INTERESTS OF OLYMPIC AIRLINES AND THE GOG. (ANOTHER EMBOFF HAS ALSO BEEN TOLD BY A LABOR LEADER OPPOSED TO THE STRIKE THAT STRIKE LEADERS ARE BEING INFLUENCED BY THE KKE - EXTERIOR.)

5. GREEK OFFICER WAS INFORMED OF EMBASSY POLICY OF NON-INVOLVEMENT BUT THAT NEVERTHELESS BOEING PILOTS WOULD BE INFORMED OF GOG WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST IF THEY WISHED TO MAKE COMPLAINTS. (TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, NO OFFICIAL COMPLAINTS OF THREATS OR HARASSMENT HAVE BEEN MADE BY BOEING PILOTS).

6. COMMENT: AS POINTED OUT IN REF A, STRIKE WAS SPARKED MARCH 21 BY DISMISSAL OF FORMER PRESIDENT OF EXPA. PRINCIPAL MOTIVATION FOR THE STRIKE APPEARS TO BE A POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND EXPA COMPLICATED BY FACTIONAL DISPUTES WITHIN EXPA. HOWEVER, STRIKE LEADERS HAVE ALSO CITED ECONOMIC DEMANDS AND BADLY NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS IN TRAFFIC CONTROL SYSTEMS AT GREEK AIRPORTS. LATTER WOULD CERTAINLY ENCOURAGE ALPA SUPPORT IF EXPA APPEAL TO O'DONNELL WAS COUCHED IN THOSE TERMS.
KUBISCH

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